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Qualitative Change in Pre-Socratic Philosophy. By W. A. HEIDEL. Reprint from *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* XIX, 1906. Pp. 47 [333-79].

Professor Heidel, who appears to be undertaking a somewhat radical revision of the prevailing interpretation of the physiologers, is concerned in the present article with their manner of conceiving the general nature of the process of Becoming. His chief contention is that the notion of ἀλλοίωσις in its stricter Aristotelian sense—of the alteration of the sensible qualities of a substrate which in its essence remains unchanged—is an idea too abstract and subtle, involving “too hard and fast a definition of identity and difference” for us to ascribe it to the pre-Socratics, especially the earlier ones. Their conception of the evolution of the cosmos must, then, have rested upon that notion which Heidel apparently regards as the only alternative to ἀλλοίωσις in the sense mentioned—the notion of μίξις—the term “denoting all forms of composition, decomposition and recombination.” The φύσις even of the Ionians was essentially a μίγμα; even in Anaximander we have something approximating the molecular theory of matter. Only, in the pre-Eleatic physiologers, it was not definitely implied in the theory that the elements of the cosmic mixture were themselves ultimate or irreducible or incapable of qualitative change. Everything was to be explained as a product of composition; but the materials out of which any composite substance was made might themselves be products of a previous composition; and so on *ad indefinitum*.

The doxographic learning which the author employs in defense of this theory is imposing and admirable; but as much cannot, I think, be said of the logical force of his reasoning. It would require more space than is available to traverse the whole argument; one can only say, by way of dogmatic generalization, that Heidel neglects several essential distinctions and makes some gratuitous and questionable *a priori* assumptions as to the ideas of which the minds of the early Greek thinkers were capable. But the essential object to the theory is that, if the pre-Socratics explained all becoming and change through μίξις, and refrained (as Heidel distinctly tells us) from even suggesting that behind all mixture there lay an elemental substance or substances, then they must be said to have offered no answer to the problem which we certainly know to have been their characteristic and central one—the problem *περὶ φύσεως*, concerning the qualitative nature of the primary matter. Heidel, in short, attributes to the Ionian philosophers an idea of the cosmic process which is incompatible with the supposition that they had any idea whatever of the cosmic substance. Of this paradoxical implication of his view the author hardly seems to be aware; duly considered, it must appear fatal to his theory. Upon subsidiary points of interpretation the paper contains a number of valuable observations.

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